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Message Text

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R 190053Z OCT 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
INFO AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 258170

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE AEGEAN OIL EXPLORATION BY US FIRMS

REF: ANKARA 7475 (NOTAL)

1. AS FOLLOW-UP TO TZOUNIS INQUIRY IN NEW YORK AND INITIAL RESPONSE FROM EMBASSY ANKARA (REFTEL), DEPARTMENT HAS SOUGHT IN LOW-KEY MANNER TO ASCERTAIN FACTS CONCERNING POSSIBLE AEGEAN OIL EXPLORATION BY US FIRMS. INFORMATION WE HAVE DEVELOPED IS FOR ADDRESSEES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE SHARED WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN EITHER GREECE OR TURKEY.

2. DEPARTMENT OFFICER TOOK OPPORTUNITY OF TELEPHONE CALLS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE MADE BY SEDCO AND GLOBAL MARINE LATE LAST WEEK TO CONVEY US POSITION REGARDING CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTIVITIES OF US FIRMS IN DISPUTED AREAS. SAME INFORMATION

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HAS ALSO BEEN PASSED TO READING & BATES AND FOSTER WHEELER.

3. ALL FOUR FIRMS WERE ADVISED OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WHICH COULD ARISE FROM OPERATIONS IN DISPUTED AREAS AND INABILITY OF US GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THEM FROM POSSIBLE HOSTILE ACTS BY A DISPUTANT BECAUSE OF ACTIVITIES IN A CONTESTED AREA. WE EMPHASIZED AT SAME TIME THAT WE WERE IN NO WAY DISCOURAGING THESE FIRMS FROM DOING BUSINESS WITH EITHER GREECE

OR TURKEY, WITH IMPLICATION BEING CLEAR THAT THE FIRMS WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO RESTRICT THEIR EXPLORATION TO NON-DISPUTED AREAS. ALL FOUR FIRMS ACKNOWLEDGED LOGIC OF US POSITION. SEDCO REPORTED TO DEPARTMENT THAT IT WAS CONSIDERING POSSIBLE CONTRACTS WITH BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY. IT DID NOT INDICATE SPECIFICALLY IN WHAT AREAS OF GREECE AND TURKEY IT WAS INTERESTED.

4. GLOBAL MARINE ASKED IF WE COULD ASSIST IN GETTING TURKEY TO EXPEDITE OVERDUE PAYMENTS ON PRESENT BLACK SEA OPERATIONS, HELD UP BY MINISTRY FINANCE DELAYS IN AUTHORIZATION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE TRANSFERS. GLOBAL MARINE REPRESENTATIVES WILL APPARENTLY VISIT EMBASSY ANKARA IN NEAR FUTURE TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM.

5. READING & BATES DENIED ANY PLANS TO DO BUSINESS WITH TURKEY BUT INDICATED THAT IT HAD UNDER CONSIDERATION A POSSIBLE CONTRACT WITH GREECE. FOSTER WHEELER SAID THAT ANY BUSINESS WITH TURKEY WOULD BE HANDLED THROUGH ITS BRITISH SUBSIDIARY.

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